



PARENTAL INFLUENCE ON CAREER CHOICE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN ENUGU SOUTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF ENUGU STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract:

This study investigated parental influence on career choice of secondary school students in Enugu South Local Government Area of Enugu State. The sample comprised of 250 students randomly selected from 3 government and 2 private schools in Enugu South Local Government Area of Enugu State. A questionnaire was constructed for each respondent by the researcher and administered to elicit responses from the respondents. From the analysis of the data collected, the findings of the study show that there is significant influence of parents' level of education on student's career choice, there is also significant influence of parents' socio-economic status and occupational background on the career choice of students. Based on the findings, some recommendations were made and it was concluded that parents should educate their children on how to make a career choice and not impose on them their own preferred career choice.

Keywords: parental influence, career choice, secondary school, Nigeria

1. Introduction

Decision making concerning appropriate choice of career or occupation to take is the most critical problem area facing students in secondary schools systems and young school leavers. Career choice is something very hard to decide, especially as an individual life depends on it.

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Career plays a very fundamental and significant role in the life of an individual not only because they determine the pattern of income but also because they affect the individual personality and concepts in life, career therefore is a choose pursuit, life work or success in one's profession occupied by a person throughout his/her life.

Egbo, A. C. (2003) posited that career is the totality of experience through which one learns about and prepares to engage in work as part of his way of living. Career therefore can be defined as the progress and actions taken by a person throughout a lifetime, specially related to his occupation. Choosing a career is an extremely important decision that impacts an individual's entire future. Choosing a career is not a trial and error exercise, it is a deliberate effort made at once.

Allport, (2004) observes that the influence home has on the child's learning is the fundamental concepts of life. Adelusi (2003) posited that parents could be a motivating or inhibiting factor to the career choice of their children, especially when it is clear that the home is the first social group which the child comes in contact. It is here that children learn to interpret realities. It offers the psychological and social needs for the growth and development of the child especially in the area of choosing a career (Caplow, 2004), Hairston (2000), stated that of all the factors that influence career choice process, family members, particularly parents are the most influential determinant of career plans, aspirations and occupational expectation.

Sarikas (2002) posited; career is an enjoying process that occurs over the life span. A right choice of career by a youth tends to result in a happy progressive and fulfilled life. Conversely a wrong choice of career may destroy the future progress of an individual thus leading to unforgettable frustrations and woes. The need to make a good choice of career becomes paramount if one is to find happiness and harmony in life.

Ipaye (2003) stated that there is need for one to discuss with one's peer, school counselors, parents and teachers on the need to choose a life span work, this is because most times, instead of people choosing occupations suitable to their intellectual abilities, you see them rushing to occupations which they cannot cope with and this often lead them to a confused end. This is why a student needs to be thoroughly furnished with the relevant information to make judicious career decision.

Oladele, (2004), stated that the child is born knowing nothing of his society. The home provides the biological traits, qualities and natural endowments which direct a human characteristics upon which all other attributes are built. This highlights the fact that home and parents occupy the most important position in the child's education. This is also supported by Orro when he asserted that even if schools had the resources

with which to meet young people's career guidance needs, neither teachers nor counsellors can replace the influence parents have on their children's career plans.

Studies have confirmed to a great extent the impact of family on career choice, therefore, career should not be left to chance or accidents among adolescents who frantically look for help from parents, teachers, peers and books. If adolescents are left unguided in the choice of career, some of them may choose wrongly and regret throughout their lives.

2. Statement of Problems

Nigerian school leavers are faced with the problem of unemployment in the World of work, in the fastly expanding technological advancement. This problem coupled with economic uncertainties was brought by inadequate career information on the availability of jobs, lack of knowledge of what career to choose by the students, misguided information by parents because most parents are ignorant of the existing careers.

Parental background on the other hand tends to be the single most influential factor in students career choice. More often, parents owing to personal idiosyncrasies, pressure their wards into taking up family occupations and other careers even when they do not possess requisite abilities, interests, values, preferences, personalities which are very important determinants of career choice. The result of this is that the child may not concentrate on the parents needs and so may not adjust positively towards the career.

Career choice tends to be a persistent problem for the students in the contemporary society. That is why it is not uncommon for students to get into occupations that are not suitable to their abilities. Sometimes, they enter the work completely pseudo-aspirations. What usually obtains in the end is job dissatisfaction, consequently, they rapidly become delusional and depressed, which leads to frustration, malfunction and inefficiency all of this translate in the long run to National economic crisis.

This study, therefore is undertaken to find out the effect of parental influence on the career choice of secondary school students in Enugu South Local Government Area of Enugu State.

3. Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is the attempt to find out the following: Specifically, the study seeks to find out

1. the what extent the level of parents education and professional background influence the career choice of students.
2. the extent to which parents socio-economic status affects their children career choice
3. the extent to which student's choice of career are influenced by the occupational preferences of their parents.
4. how parents cultural background and environmental factors influence students choice of career.

3.1 Research Questions

The research questions which the study attempts to verify are as follows:

1. To what extent do parents level of education and professional background influence students' choice of career?
2. To what extent does parents' socio-economic status influence the career choice of secondary school students?
3. To what extent does parents' occupational preference affect the students choice of career?
4. To what extent does parents' cultural background and environmental factors influence career choice of student?

4. Research Methodology

The survey research design was adopted in carrying out this research. This is because in a survey, only a part of the population was studied regarding parental influence on career choice of secondary school students. The findings from this was generalized to the entire population.

4.1 Population of the Study

The population of the study consists of all the SSII students in the five selected secondary schools in Enugu South Local Government Area of Enugu State. The population of the SSII students in the five selected secondary schools was one thousand two hundred and fifty (1250)

4.2 Sample and Sampling Techniques

In this study, five secondary schools were randomly selected for effective analysis. Sample of two hundred and fifty (250) students out of one thousand two hundred and fifty (1250) students were selected. The respondents considered of 50 students randomly selected from these schools.

4.3 Instrument for Data Collection

A structured questionnaire was distributed to the students of both sexes. It was designed to match the aims and objectives of the study. The questionnaires contained items designed to cover the research questions that will help elicit answer and solution to parental influence on career choice of secondary school students.

4.4 Validity of the Instrument

The draft questionnaire was given to the supervisor of the project work and two experts in measurement and evaluation for face validation. Based on their opinion, important modifications were made, and the final instrument was obtained.

4.5 Administration of the Instrument

The questionnaire was personally administered by the researcher. The researcher distributed a total of 250 copies of the questionnaire to the SSII students randomly selected for the study in the five selected secondary schools in Enugu South local government area of Enugu state.

4.6 Method of Data Analysis

The data gathered through the questionnaire were analyzed using tables, mean scores and frequencies. The information relating to the research question were collated and presented in chapter four (4) for analysis and interpretation.

However, the score for each respondent was obtained by using the modified likert type scale with assigned values as follow:

Strongly Agreed	-	SA= 4
Agree	-	A= 3
Disagreed	-	D =2
Strongly Disagreed	-	SD=1

4.7 Decision Rule

The decision rule of this study is done in the way that any value above 50% or the mean score of 2.5 is agreed. While any value that is less than 50% or the mean score of 2.5 is disagreed.

5. Results

A. Research Question I

To what extent does parents' educational and professional background influence student's choice of career?

Table I: Frequencies and tables for parental educational and professional background

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Total	FX	X	Decision
I	Parents educational and professional background affects students choice of career	160	60	50	15	250	935	3.7	Accept
Ii	Parent educational and professional background does not affect students choice of career	20	45	160	0	250	535	2.1	Reject
Iii	Parents encourage their wards to make their choices irrespective of their educational and professional background	24	12	160	10	250	462	1.8	Reject

From the above table 1, item 1 were accepted because the mean score was above 2.5 which is the decision rule, so the findings proved that parents professional and educational background affects students choice of career. While item 2 and 3 was rejected because their mean score was below the mean score, the findings here proved that parents do not encourage their wards to make choices irrespective of their background.

B. Research Question II

How does parents' socio-economic status influence the choice of students' career?

Table II: Frequencies and Table for parents' socio-economic status influence on students' career choice

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Total	FX	X	Decision
I	Parents encourage their wards to choose occupation based on their socio-economic status	84	135	44	12	250	841	3.3	Accept
Ii	Parents socio-economic status does not influence occupational choice of students	24	12	160	10	250	462	1.8	Reject
Iii	Parents encourage their children to make their choice regardless of their socio-economic status	20	45	160	0	250	535	2.1	Reject

From the above table 2 item 1 was accepted because the mean score was above 2.5 which is the decision rule, so the findings here proved that parents encourage their wards to choose occupation because of their socio-economic status. While item 2 and 3 were rejected because their mean score was below the decision rule. The findings here proved that parents do not encourage their children to go into an occupation that is in contrast with their socio-economic status.

C. Research Question III

To what extent does parent's occupational preference affect student's career choice?

Table III: Frequencies and table for parents' occupational influence on students' choice of career

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Total	FX	X	Decision
I	Parents occupational preference affect career choice of students	64	150	36	16	250	794	3.1	Accept
Ii	Parents choose occupation for their wards because of their position in the society	80	117	40	21	250	772	3.0	Accept
Iii	Parents encourage their wards to make career choice by themselves irrespective of their occupational background	48	24	144	8	250	560	2.2	Reject

In the above table 3, item 1 and 2 got the mean score of 2.5 and above and were accepted. The findings here proved that parents' occupational preference and position in the society affect students choice of career, while item 3 was rejected because the mean score was below 2.5. The finding shows that parents do not encourage their

children to make career choices by themselves irrespective of their occupational preference and background.

D. Research Question IV

To what extent does parents' cultural background influence student's choice of career?

Table IV: Frequencies and table for parent's cultural background influence on student's choice of career

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Total	FX	X	Decision
I	Parents encourage their wards to choose occupation on their cultural background	24	12	160	10	250	462	1.8	Rejected
Ii	Parents encourage their children to make their choice of career not minding the cultural background.	160	60	50	15	250	935	3.7	Accepted
Iii	Parents encourage their wards to choose occupation according to their intellectual ability	48	24	144	8	250	560	2.2	Reject

From the above table IV, items 1 and 3 got a mean score that is below 2.5 which is the decision rule and was rejected. The findings proved that parents do not encourage their wards to make career choices based on their culture and intellectual ability. While item 2 was accepted because the mean score was above 2.5. The findings here shows that parents encourage their wards to make their choice of career irrespective of their culture.

6. Discussion of Findings

The result of the findings indicated that parental influence will have significant effect on adolescents' career choice, and that perceptions of parental occupational satisfaction will not have effects on the career aspiration of adolescents based on the following intervening variables such as sex, and type of school. These findings are at variance with Herbert (2007) when he asserted that parents' career aspirations aid children in selecting occupational goals, influence their knowledge of occupations, and familiarize them with occupational roles and requirements. Whether the child internalizes those aspirations is greatly determined by numerous values found at home. The findings are also not in consonance with people's opinion as cited by Friesen (1981) that the individual does not exercise career choice, but that the social and economic environment determines the vocational choices that are made.

The results of the findings agrees with sociologists' view that the range of occupations that an individual will consider in choosing a career is determined largely by the status expectations of the social class to which he belongs. (Oladele, (2004). The implications of the vocational choices people make are related to their social class, and the social origins of an individual limit the range of occupational opportunities available to the person. Students who come from lower class homes often find it difficult to continue their education while those from upper class homes obtain much encouragement from their peers to continue their studies. In a situation where parental influence interferes with the career choice of adolescents, a crisis may develop when there is mismatch in terms of the ego strength of the child and the environmental pressures that challenge their identity. The adolescents straddle the line between childhood obedience and adult independence.

Also from the findings, factors that contributed to that were, basic loving and supportive parent behaviours which seems to be more important than specific career-related action behaviours. The multiple regression analyses of the report revealed that when students feel supported and loved by their parents, they have more skills in thinking about careers and in the world of work than when they do not feel supported and loved. The results also indicated that when students feel supported and loved by their parents, they have more confidence in their own ability to find career information and to choose a career that would be interesting to them. This is important because other research shows that adolescents who feel efficacious regarding career decision-making tend to make more satisfying career choices later in life.

7. Recommendations for the Study

1. There is need to organize career talks right from secondary schools. This will help the student in their choice of career/subject combination that would be relevant to their choice of course in the university and other tertiary institutions.
2. Students should be exposed to various educational opportunities to make up for lack of stimulating home background.
3. Good inter-personal relationship with Parents Teachers Association (PTA) should be established between parents and teachers. This will help make learning a continuous process from home to school.
4. Parents should not force their occupation on their children but should encourage their progress at school.

8. Conclusion

From the research conducted, it was discovered that there were many areas of influence of parents on career choice of secondary school students in Enugu south local government area of Enugu state. One of these areas is that most of the wealthy parents always insist that their children must be enrolled in the high rated careers such as: medicine, Law, Engineering etc. without knowing if the child's intellectual abilities are in congruent with such career.

The researches questionnaire reveals that educated parents prefer choosing career for their children, while children from uneducated parents a time go astray in making their choice of career because there is no one to guide or advice such child.

Finally, it revealed that some parents insist on a particular occupation for their children, even when the child will excel better in other profession, their parents will force them to take a particular occupation with reasons best known to them.

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